

Worlds of Byzantium

DUMBARTON OAKS SYMPOSIUM, 22–23 APRIL 2016

SYMPOSIARCHS:

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In 1980 Dumbarton Oaks hosted the now famous “East of Byzantium” symposium, which resulted in an era-defining volume of scholarly articles under the same name, edited by N. Garsoïan, T. Mathews, and R. Thomson. This gathering of experts in various eastern Christian traditions put Dumbarton Oaks at the forefront of the emergent conversation about Byzantium’s eastern neighbors. Today, the medieval Mediterranean within which Byzantium was situated appears much more complex and fluid than what was envisioned thirty years ago. New archaeological, historical, and literary research has made this fluidity abundantly clear and has opened up new questions about the formation of identity in the empire as the relationship between the metropolis and the provinces fluctuated.

Our symposium sought to reconsider Byzantium

from late antiquity through the middle ages, problematizing long-established notions of its character and parameters. What was Byzantium? Where was it? What religions did its people practice, and which languages did they speak? Speakers examined afresh the foundational characteristics normally ascribed to “Byzantium”—Greek-speaking, Orthodox Christian, Constantinopolitan—and attempted to reset scholars’ expectations about what counts as Byzantine, in order to follow in the footsteps of “East of Byzantium,” to transform the expectations of a generation and to make Byzantium more central player in the world historical stage framed by scholars. A polycentric and interconnected Byzantium strengthens the field of Byzantine Studies, by making it indispensable to other fields.

FRIDAY, 22 APRIL

Introduction

Elizabeth S. Bolman (Temple University)

IDENTITY AND EMPIRE

A New Byzantine Commonwealth

Scott F. Johnson (University of Oklahoma)

How Byzantines became Greeks: Greek Nationalism and Byzantine Studies

Kostis Kourelis (Franklin and Marshall College)

Byzantium and the Turn to the East

Averil Cameron (University of Oxford)

Islamic Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and Iran

Antoine Borrut (University of Maryland)

King and God(s) in Early Armenian Sagas

Robin Darling Young (Catholic University of America)

Byzantine Georgia / Georgian Byzantium

Stephen Rapp (Sam Houston State University)

Art at the Edges: Shifting Perceptions of the Middle Byzantine Eastern Periphery

Alicia Walker (Bryn Mawr College)

FRIDAY, 22 APRIL

MOVEMENT AND PLACE

The Dynamics Place and Space in Early Byzantine Visual Culture

Elizabeth S. Bolman

Babel on the Bosphorus? Languages in the Byzantine World

Arietta Papaconstantinou (University of Reading)

Byzantine Syriac and Byzantine Arabic

Jack Tannous (Princeton University)

Jerusalem's Liturgy and Its Byzantinization

Daniel Galadza (University of Vienna)

The Social Lives of Things East of Byzantium

Cecily Hilsdale (McGill University)

CONCLUSION

East of Byzantium Revisited

Columba Stewart (Hill Museum and Manuscript Library/Saint John's University)